

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-17, 19-21 and 34 are pending.

The rejection of claims 1-7, 9-17, 19-21 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnston (US 4,748,862) in view of Jacoby (US 2,831,737) is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 15 recite a pinion moveable along a output shaft of a starter assembly. The pinion includes an inner surface terminating at an end face of the pinion where the inner surface and the plane defined by the end face are perpendicular with each other and intersect to define a secondary edge. A primary edge is formed along a length of the inner surface and extends to the end face. The primary edge removes particles from the shaft as the pinion moves along the output shaft. A groove is formed along the length of the inner surface and adjacent the primary edge for receiving the particles from the primary edge. A longitudinal end of the groove slopes outwardly along the end face to intersect the primary edge of the inner surface.

Applicant respectfully asserts that Johnston and Jacoby, even if properly combinable, fail to disclose the elements of independent claims 1 and 15. Johnston, as discussed in previous responses to office actions fails to disclose an inner surface and an end face intersecting to define a secondary edge. Jacoby is cited to describe a plurality of debris channels having an inner surface and end face intersect a secondary edge and a primary edge of the channel formed along the inner surface of the housing. However, Jacoby describes channels (e.g., grooves) having cylindrical bottom walls (26) and radially inwardly convergent side walls (27) which converge with the inner bearing surface. The side walls of Jacoby converge when intersecting with the inner bearing surface, whereas claim 1 includes a groove having outwardly sloping walls along the end face that intersect with the inner surface.

In Johnston (as discussed earlier in applicant's response dated July 18,

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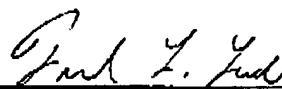
2005), the inner surface 24 does not intersect the end face in order to form a secondary edge. The inner surface 24 in Johnston does not extend to the end face because the inner surface 24 terminates at the inner chamber edge of the chamfer face 22. The chamfer face in Johnston cannot be interpreted to be part of the end face as recited in claims 1 and 15 because the chamfer face is not defined by a plane that is perpendicular to the inner surface. As a result, the groove does not extend along the end face to intersect the inner surface. Jacoby and Johnston fails to describe or suggest, either individually or in combination, the end of the groove sloping outwardly along the end face to intersect the primary edge of the inner surface. Therefore, claim 1 and 15 are allowable.

Claims 2-7 and 9-14 depend from claim 1, and claims 16, 17, 19-21, and 34 depend from claim 15 and are therefore allowable for the reasons provided above.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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7

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